

sponsored by the Blount Chamber Foundation. She was responsible for starting Dogwood Drives in 1983 and others that followed with the exception of the East Maryville, added since she retired, and the Teacher Mini-grant program. The last five years or so her title was Vice President of Community Development for the Chamber and she worked with all programs involving many community activities as well as other organizations.

While working, Bobbie spent many extra hours on the job because of her devotion to the community. And since retirement she has continued to be active. She has served as President of the Friends of the Library, a member of the Keep Blount Beautiful Board, member of the Blount County Bicentennial Committee and was responsible for a parade for an all-day celebration. She is currently serving as treasurer of Blount County Education Foundation and prior to that served two years as secretary for the Foundation. For four years she has served as chair of Day of Caring for United Way and presently serves as Communications Coordinator for the Holston Conference United Methodist Women. She is a member of Broadway Methodist Church.

She is serving as co-chairman of the Blount County Millennium Committee with activities coordinated with community organizations with a different focus on each month. Members of the committee designed an official Blount County flag which is available for sale in the county executive's office. The Adopt A School sponsors have purchased a flag for their school. This flag is really visible at the Blount County Justice Center.

Along with Bryan Cable, she leads a hike in the Smokies for the Dogwood Arts Festival. Previous winners include 2000—Tutt S. Bradford, 1999—Carmian "Connie" Davis, 1998—Stanley B. "Skeeter" Shields, 1997—Judson B. Murphy, 1996—Garland DeLozier, 1995—Stone Carr, 1994—Dean Stone, and 1993—Elsie Burrell.

The Volunteer State didn't get its nickname by accident. Its volunteers accomplish much of the work needed in communities across the state. Certainly none has done more than Bobbie who continued her volunteer efforts throughout major illness and surgery from which she has recovered.

Our hats are off to Bobbie and her outstanding example of volunteer work in Blount County, building a better community!

Our voice.

On Pride of Tennessee.

DEREGULATION CALLED BLOW TO MINORITIES

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 15, 2000

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to voice concern about the increasingly insurmountable barriers that minorities and women in the telecommunications and broadcast marketplace are experiencing since passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Recent studies have shown that since deregulation, minority- and women-owned companies have had a more difficult time getting financing for starting new ventures and expanding, and when they have received financing, it is often on less favorable terms than comparable majority run businesses. Adverse trends in the courts and in Congress have had a negative

impact on small minority owned communication companies. It is imperative that Congress, the courts, the F.C.C. and the Bush administration help ensure that minority and women owned communications enterprises have equal opportunities in their abilities to compete in the marketplace. The following New York Times article is an excellent summary of this crisis.

[From the New York Times, Dec. 12, 2000]

DEREGULATION CALLED BLOW TO MINORITIES

(By Stephen Labaton)

Washington, Dec. 11.—The 1996 landmark law that was warmly embraced by the Clinton administration and many Republicans as a way to begin deregulating the nation's telecommunications industry has had the unintended effect of raising substantial new barriers for companies controlled by minorities and women, new independent studies commissioned by the federal government have found.

The studies show that the wave of consolidation in the broadcast, telephone and cable industries prompted by the Telecommunications Act of 1996 had created "nearly insurmountable obstacles" to those seeking to enter those industries and to thrive.

They also found that in general over the last 50 years, companies controlled by minorities and women have been far less likely to win government licenses for telephone service and radio or television stations, even if they are qualified to run those operations. In recent years, the studies found, the 1996 law in combination with changes in tax law and affirmative action rules, had made the problems for small businesses particularly acute.

"Today small firms face barriers erected by deregulation and consolidation in both wireless and broadcast," one of the studies said. "Minorities and women confront those same barriers; and yet those obstacles stand high atop a persistent legacy of discrimination in the capital markets, industry, advertising and community—and prior F.C.C. policies, which worsened the effects of discrimination."

"The barriers to entry have been raised so high that, left standing, they appear virtually insurmountable," the study concluded. "Minority, women and small-business ownership in these industries is diminishing at such an alarming rate that many we spoke with felt we had passed the point of no return."

While it has long been known that minorities and women face difficulties in a wide range of industries, the five studies to be released on Tuesday by the Federal Communications Commission conclude that barriers imposed by both the government and the marketplace have taken a particular toll in telecommunications and the so-called new economy companies, where the lifeblood is the government license to use a part of the airways.

"These studies confirm that small minority and women-owned businesses are encountering significant difficulties in participating in the new economy," said William E. Kennard, chairman of the F.C.C. "With consolidation in the past few years it's clear that it's become harder for any business that is small to participate as an owner of infrastructure, whether it is cable systems or whether it is phones or broadcasting. But this is still a vitally important part of our economy, and we have to make sure that we are creating opportunity for small minority- and women-owned businesses."

In his more than seven years as the agency's general counsel and then its chairman, Mr. Kennard, the first African-American to

head the F.C.C., has struggled against a hostile Republican Congress and a lukewarm administration in trying to find new opportunities for minorities and women. An earlier study he commissioned showed minority broadcasters often cannot command the same advertising revenues as other broadcasters."

Mr. Kennard said he had hoped that the studies would provide a blue-print for a Gore administration to take new steps on behalf of small companies. He also acknowledged that the prospect of a Bush administration may significantly diminish the impact of the studies on future policy makers.

Regulators and courts have long described the spectrum as a public trust that needs to be managed in the best interests of the public, but the studies conclude that minorities and women have had a difficult time for the last half-century and that it still remains especially difficult for them to win licenses and get financing for their ventures on a footing comparable to their rivals.

In one study, entitled "Whose Spectrum Is It Anyway?" researchers found that the 1996 law, following other adverse trends in the courts and in Congress, had been particularly hard on those small companies.

In 1995 Congress eliminated a tax program intended to encourage investment in small, minority- and women-owned telecommunication companies. Around the same time, the United States Supreme Court and other federal courts began to hand down a series of decisions that made it significantly more difficult for the federal government to carry out affirmative action programs and take steps to assist minority businesses.

The studies concluded that in the area of broadcasting, ownership can have a deep impact on programming, and that the lack of diversity among owners could lead to less diverse kinds of programs. Minority-owned radio stations, for example, were far more likely to choose a programming format that appeals particularly to a minority audience, and were more likely to have greater racial diversity of on-air talent.

The studies show that minority- and women-owned companies have had a more difficult time getting financing for starting new ventures and expanding, and when they have received financing, it is often on less favorable terms than comparable businesses run by white men.

The F.C.C. had earlier encouraged small businesses by permitting them to bid in license auctions and make payments in installments. But after some businesses defaulted on those loans, the rules were changed.

On Tuesday the agency will begin what many expect will be the largest auction in its history, for licenses to operate mobile telephones, and all winners will have to make their payments upfront.

The studies also show that officials at the F.C.C. have been inconsistent in their application of equal opportunity guidelines, and that the agency "often failed in its role of public trustee of the broadcast and wireless spectrum by not properly taking into account the effect of its programs on small, minority- and women-owned businesses."

The studies, which are expected to be made public by the F.C.C. on Tuesday, were conducted by KPMG; Ernst & Young; the Ivy Planning Group, a consulting group based in Rockville, Md.; and researchers from Santa Clara University and the University of Washington.